In Memoriam: Norman Park Ramsey

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NORMAN PARK RAMSEY
1922-1993

The editors of *Maryland Law Review*
dedicate this issue to the memory of
Norman Park Ramsey
We are pleased to announce

and invite you to

The First Annual

Norman P. Ramsey Lecture

with Guest Lecturer

Lawrence E. Walsh

Thursday, September 8, 1994

5:30 P.M.

Westminster Hall

515 W. Fayette Street

Baltimore, Maryland

Friends of Judge Ramsey
IN MEMORIAM: NORMAN PARK RAMSEY

DAVID R. OWEN*

Shortly after the death of Norman Ramsey (hereinafter referred to as "Norm," as I always knew him) I wrote an obituary that was primarily biographical with a few personal allusions. My theme here is different: a collection of personal vignettes of most of which only I have personal knowledge.

Our friendship began in September 1945 under unusual circumstances. I had left my Navy destroyer at the island of Okinawa in the western Pacific with orders to proceed home on the ancient battleship USS Arkansas. This was a destroyerman's dream: to the Golden Gate on a battleship! I climbed the accommodation ladder to the quarterdeck, saluted the colors, and at that moment heard my name called. I turned and saw approaching me a young Marine Corps officer with his hand stuck out. "Are you David Owen from Baltimore?" he asked. I admitted it. "Well, I'm Norm Ramsey from Baltimore," he said. In typical Ramsey fashion, Norm had studied the passenger list until he found someone with whom he had something in common.

It was a long, slow voyage, and Norm and I had many conversations about where we had come from and where we were going professionally. He had been in law school for a year, searching titles on the side for five dollars apiece. I had been a member of the Bar and associated with Semmes, Bowen & Semmes for a year and a half before going on active duty in early 1941. Norm appeared impressed with my description of work at the firm and with its generosity toward the asso-

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ciates. (My salary had been increased from $100 a month to $125 at the end of my first year.)

In January 1946, I rejoined Semmes, Bowen & Semmes, but for a year or so I lost track of Norm, who had returned to law school. Then one day I was walking down the corridor on the fifth floor of the old federal courthouse, headed to the courtroom of the famous U.S. District Judge W. Calvin Chesnut. As I passed the door to his chambers, a young man rushed out and stuck out his hand; it was Norm. He had taken the first step toward becoming a great lawyer: a clerkship with Judge Chesnut, who was the first of four mentors who helped Norm reach the peak of his profession.

The second of Norm's mentors was Bernard J. Flynn, who, as U.S. Attorney, employed Norm as an Assistant U.S. Attorney from 1947 through 1951. In the latter year, Norm represented the Government in a bankruptcy case in which opposing counsel was Rignal W. Baldwin of Semmes, Bowen & Semmes, who became Norm's third mentor as a trial lawyer and a devoted friend. "Rig" came back to the office full of enthusiasm for this young lawyer and reported it to Edwin F.A. Morgan, then Managing Partner, who ran the firm single-handedly. He approved Rig's hiring recommendation, and before the year was out Norman Ramsey was an associate at Semmes, Bowen & Semmes. He may have had this result in mind since our conversations in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. "Eddie" Morgan was somewhat snobbish about some things, including educational institutions, and Norm's education had suffered from family finances and World War II. Eddie did appreciate real quality, however, and it did not take long for him to see it in Norm and to become Norm's fourth mentor in business law and office practice.

The difference in their backgrounds never impeded Eddie Morgan's affection and admiration for Norm Ramsey. This was revealed in a professional incident of which I have personal knowledge (otherwise it might seem incredible). Mr. Morgan was counsel for one of the best known corporations in Maryland. He was also a stockholder and a director and, indeed, the company bore the name of his ancestor, who had founded it. A suit was filed in the federal court by a stockholder whose family controlled the company. The case was scheduled for trial before the erudite Judge R. Dorsey Watkins, and Eddie Morgan had to win that case! He was not a trial lawyer himself, so he organized a team at the head of which was the senior litigator of Semmes, Bowen & Semmes (not Rig Baldwin), and the junior was Norm Ramsey. The senior excelled in rough and tumble jury trials, but in this case there was no jury. The sophisticated corporate case did
not go well during the first week, and Eddie Morgan was very much upset. Before the second week commenced, he had excused the senior from further participation and turned the trial over to Norm Ramsey. Judge Watkins dismissed the complaint, and there was no appeal.

I believe that what led up to that victory was a case in which I was the senior. I was then a partner and Norm an associate. The client I represented was the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, a U.S. Government agency. (How we happened to represent a Government corporation was never made clear to me, but Mr. John E. Semmes, Jr., must have arranged it.) Norm and I filed a suit in the federal court against a defaulting debtor of the RFC. At that time there were only two U.S. District Judges, W. Calvin Chesnut and William C. Coleman. Although I would never suggest that any federal judge could harbor any prejudice of any kind, it was then a fact of federal practice that any lawyer appearing in opposition to the U.S. Government should do his best to get the case before Judge Coleman. That is to say, Norm and I would have greatly preferred to see our case assigned to Judge Chesnut. This was impossible, however, because our defendant was represented by Wilson K. Barnes, Esquire, Judge Chesnut’s son-in-law. Norm and I courageously struggled through the case before Judge Coleman, but when the time came for final argument, I cowardly turned it over to Norm. When we got back to the office, I told Eddie Morgan and Rig Baldwin that I had just heard the finest oral argument of my career. Of course, we lost and took an appeal. We wrote the brief together, but before going to the Court of Appeals in Richmond I told Norm that the argument was his. In due course the Fourth Circuit reversed Judge Coleman, and Norm was vindicated.

Eddie Morgan died in December 1965, and the following year Norm and I commenced dragging the firm, kicking and screaming, into the 20th century. We created an Executive Committee. We organized partners’ meetings. We mounted an aggressive recruiting campaign. We organized a Points Committee to divide up the pie (Eddie Morgan had done this on the back of an envelope). We started a “Keough Plan.” We started work on a Partners’ Retirement Plan. In 1975 I became Chairman of the firm, and on March 1, 1979, I was succeeded by Norman P. Ramsey, who continued in that office until he went on the bench in October 1980.

Norm Ramsey and Rig Baldwin were the two best all-around lawyers I ever knew, and neither would object to this comparison. Norm had the quickest mind I have ever encountered. He was a whiz at figures. Watching him cross-examine an accountant was, I thought,
like watching a brain surgeon at work. Given time, he could appar-
ently master any subject, no matter how exotic. There was only one
exception to this versatility, about which I shall say something below.

Norm developed a considerable reputation as a defense lawyer in
“white collar crime” cases, particularly those with political implica-
tions. Less well known, fortunately, was his defense of members of the
Bar charged with tax offenses or professional misconduct. Lawyers in
such troubles went first to Norm Ramsey. Sworn to tell the whole
truth, I would have to concede that a disproportionate number of
these miscreants took advantage of Norm. I could name several law-
yers who accepted his services and then failed to pay his modest fee.

Norm Ramsey possessed a unique combination of personality and
intellect. He was a superior human being, but that is not to say that
he was super-human. His human characteristics were just arranged
differently from those of other people. Always pleasant and agreea-
ble, Norm apparently could never get angry. Or could he? Yes, he
definitely could get very angry, and when that happened, one had bet-
ter batten down the hatches because the ship was headed into very
heavy weather. I have personally been in the eye of this hurricane, but
to paraphrase Shakespeare, “the course of true [friendship] never did
run smooth.”

The United States District Court for the District of Maryland has
had some highly qualified judges, commencing with William Paca in
1789. Perhaps the best qualified of all took the oath in 1980: Norman
P. Ramsey. Others can speak more knowledgeably about Norm’s judi-
cial career, because obviously I could not, and did not, practice in his
court. I would, however, like to mention briefly several incidents in
connection with it. At the memorial service for Norm in June 1993
two former, and quite visible, political figures followed one another to
the microphone to testify emotionally and sincerely about their deep
respect for Judge Ramsey. They were Walter Orlinsky, formerly Presi-
dent of the Baltimore City Council, and Tommie Broadwater, former
State Senator from Prince George’s County. What these two character
witnesses had in common was that they each had been sentenced to
prison by Judge Ramsey at different times and in different cases. They
wanted the world to know what a fine judge he had been and how
much he had helped them to straighten out their lives. Had I not
been sitting there on the front row, I could never have believed that
such a thing could happen.

After retiring in 1983, I took up a semi-academic career of writing articles and books on the subject of maritime law, a subject into which Norm had never delved before going on the bench. In due course a number of admiralty cases came before Norm. I disagreed with his opinions in two of them to the point that I wrote law review articles so stating. In one of the articles I said that the case was "unique" and that I hoped it would "remain unique." (The Court of Appeals later accomplished that.) Frankly, I thought that it was a deft way of disposing of the problem, but Norm took issue with my view. No permanent damage resulted from these professional disagreements. As experienced lawyers, we treated them as merely proving once again that there are very few absolutes in the practice of law, or in the judging of it, and that anyone seeking absolutes should take up the study of engineering or mathematics.

In October 1992 Norm retired from the bench and returned to Semmes, Bowen & Semmes. We were all absolutely ecstatic about this development. Not only did we love and respect Norm Ramsey, but we knew that there was no firm in Maryland that would not gladly have given him a big office with his name on the door and some prestigious title. As it was, Norm got a small office (at his request) and the new title of "General Counsel." Within weeks Norm was back in the trenches, fighting for clients in important matters. I remember hearing a young lawyer say with admiration that he had asked Norm's secretary if the Judge were available and being told: "Judge Ramsey is in court."

I should like to add something about Norm's relationship with young lawyers. To put it succinctly, they simply adored him. From the earliest years Norm represented everything that young law clerks, law school graduates, associates, and junior partners wanted to become and achieve. He was bright, he was hard-working, he was highly respected and widely popular. Most of all, he was a great lawyer who represented the peak of the profession.

In conclusion, I should like to offer a simple analysis of Norm's approach to people and institutions, to problems and tasks. This was one of complete dedication. He was dedicated to the lawyers and staff at Semmes, Bowen & Semmes and to the firm as an institution. He was dedicated to his clients whether they were right or wrong. He was dedicated to the legal profession and to the federal judiciary in particular. He was dedicated to the community as a whole and to every part of it, regardless of gender, race, religion, or national origin. Above all he was dedicated to his family, to his four daughters and to the wife who survives him, Tucky Patz Heller Ramsey. Tucky came into
Norm’s life at a critical time and brought him back from the depths of despair following the death of his first wife, Peg. Tucky was full of pep, which he badly needed. Most important of all, she was as devoted to Norm as he was to her.

During his life Norm Ramsey belonged to many fine organizations, but of them all he was perhaps most proud of having been an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps. I can hear him now humming the last verse of the Marine Corps Hymn:

If the Army and the Navy
Ever gaze on Heaven’s scenes
They will find the streets are guarded by
United States Marines

ALEXANDER HARVEY, II*

My professional and personal acquaintance with Norman P. Ramsey began in 1956 when we both served in the Office of the Attorney General of the State of Maryland. We have been friends ever since. The Attorney General at the time was C. Ferdinand Sybert, who later became a judge of the Court of Appeals of Maryland. Little did Norman and I know in the mid-1950s that some twenty-five years later we would be colleagues on the bench of the United States District Court for the District of Maryland.

Norman Ramsey was appointed an Assistant Attorney General by Attorney General Sybert on January 3, 1955. The Attorney General’s Office at the time was apparently a breeding ground for future federal judges. Fourth Circuit Judge Frank Murnaghan was an Assistant Attorney General between 1952 and 1954. When Norman received his appointment, Harrison Winter, later both a Maryland District Court Judge and Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, was Deputy Attorney General. Harrison Winter resigned as Deputy on June 30, 1955, and Norman Ramsey was appointed Deputy on July 1, 1955. When I was appointed an Assistant on November 2, 1955, Norman was my immediate boss.

The office was a small one, and there was great collegiality. We worked together closely, we exchanged ideas, and we learned a lot from each other, although I undoubtedly learned more from him than he did from me. Both Attorney General Sybert and Deputy Attorney General Ramsey delegated substantial responsibilities to their assistants. It was a wonderful place for a young lawyer to work, learn-

* Senior Judge, United States District Court for the District of Maryland.
ing about operations of the state government from the inside, gaining experience in trying cases, arguing appeals, and writing opinions giving legal advice to state officials and state departments. Our activities and opinions are recounted in detail in the *Opinions of the Attorney General* of that period.¹ I served with Norman for some fourteen months before returning to private practice in 1957, as he did also. During that early period, I was able to gain a close-up appreciation of his outstanding skills as an attorney. From various different perspectives since then, I have watched and marveled at his career. My respect and admiration for his remarkable talents continued to grow over the years.

When memorial tributes are written about judges, it is usually their judicial career that is most often addressed. But Norman Ramsey's life with the law encompassed so much more than the twelve years that he spent on the federal bench. He knew that the law was not merely judging—it was practicing in a private law firm, it was representing federal, state, and city clients, it was trying important cases and arguing appeals, it was mediating disputes, it was teaching law, and it was participating in and being a leader in bar association activities designed to improve the administration of justice. Norman Ramsey's make-up was such that he did not want to do only one or a few of these things—he wanted to do them all. And he did! During the years from 1947 when he was admitted to practice in Maryland until his unexpected death in June 1993, Norman Ramsey's law-related activities were extraordinarily numerous and diverse.

The public career of Norman Ramsey began shortly after he was admitted to practice. After graduating from law school, he was a law clerk to U.S. District Judge W. Calvin Chesnut in 1947. There is little doubt that he learned much from Judge Chesnut, and in later years he recounted many anecdotes concerning this remarkable jurist. From 1948 to 1950, Norman was an Assistant U.S. Attorney. As noted, he was Deputy Attorney General of the State of Maryland from 1955 to 1957. Thereafter, he devoted his energies and talents to private practice as a partner in Semmes, Bowen & Semmes, one of the leading firms in Baltimore. As a practicing attorney, he did everything. He was an office lawyer as well as an active litigator in both civil and criminal cases in state and federal courts. He tried cases, and he argued appeals. After I was appointed to the federal bench in 1966, I looked forward to cases which were tried and argued before me by Norman P.

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¹. See volumes 40 and 41 of the *Annual Report and Official Opinions of the Attorney General of Maryland*, covering the years 1955 and 1956.
Ramsey, Esquire. One's job is made so much easier when well-prepared counsel, knowledgeable in the law, appear in the case. Norman Ramsey was always that type of attorney.

During his years of practice, Norman represented many well-known clients, including U.S. Senator Daniel B. Brewster and Baltimore County Executive Dale Anderson among others. One of his most celebrated clients was Irving Kovens, who was charged with mail fraud along with Governor Marvin Mandel and other codefendants in a notorious federal indictment. Kovens and the others were convicted following a lengthy trial in 1977, and prison sentences were imposed. The convictions were ultimately affirmed by the Fourth Circuit.²

Norman had argued cogently in a motion to dismiss, again throughout the trial, and during the later appeal that the federal mail fraud statute could not be applied to conduct like that charged in the federal indictment. Had the Fourth Circuit and the Supreme Court only listened to him at the time, a miscarriage of justice would have been avoided, and the prison sentences imposed would never have been served. After the Fourth Circuit had split three-to-three and later four-to-four and accordingly had affirmed the convictions of Kovens and the others, the Supreme Court denied certiorari.³ Years later, the Supreme Court vindicated the position taken by Norman Ramsey during the trial and appeal and held that the federal mail fraud statute was limited in scope to the protection of property rights and did not refer to the intangible right of the citizenry to good government.⁴ Later, in an opinion by Judge Smalkin of our Court relying on McNally, the convictions of Kovens and the other defendants were set aside, years after they had served their sentences of imprisonment.⁵ This unfortunate result would have been avoided had the sound and persistent arguments of Norman P. Ramsey only been recognized and accepted earlier.

Merely practicing law in the 1960s and 1970s was not enough for Norman's many talents. He was an instructor at the University of Maryland School of Law. He interspersed his private practice with continuing public service. He was a close friend of Mayor William Donald Schaefer and when the Mayor needed help, he turned to his old friend Norman Ramsey. Norman was at different times President

². United States v. Mandel, 591 F.2d 1347, 1357 (4th Cir.) (en banc), aff'd on reh'g, 602 F.2d 653 (4th Cir. 1979) (en banc), cert. denied, 445 U.S. 961 (1980).
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of the Baltimore City Civil Service Commission, President of the Baltimore City School Board, and President of the Baltimore City Fire Board. But not even privately practicing law, teaching, and undertaking various types of public service were enough for this energetic man. He was extremely active in bar association matters, devoting his talents to improving the administration of justice. Norman served on the Board of Governors of the Maryland Bar Association from 1965 to 1975, and he became President of that Association in 1973. Meanwhile, he had also been very active in the American Bar Association, serving in the House of Delegates and on the Board of Governors. There is little doubt that he would have become President of the American Bar Association had his beloved wife Peg not been stricken with cancer. She died in 1979.

In 1980, Norman turned his attention to the federal bench. He had previously served two terms as a member of the American Bar Association Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary. He was the Fourth Circuit representative who reviewed the credentials of Presidential nominees to the Maryland bench, as well as those of nominees to other courts in the Fourth Circuit. Judge Stanley Blair was one of the judges recommended by Norman Ramsey and the Standing Committee to be a District Judge in Maryland. Ironically, it was Judge Blair’s seat to which Norman was later appointed. Judge Blair died suddenly in April 1980, and Norman Ramsey became a serious candidate for the opening. The appointment went forward with remarkable speed. Norman Ramsey was found to be “exceptionally well qualified,” which is the highest rating that can be given to a candidate and one only sparingly awarded by the American Bar Association Standing Committee. The Senate Judiciary Committee, acting with unusual alacrity, confirmed Norman Ramsey as a Maryland District Judge, and the appointment became effective on September 30, 1980. Indeed, he was the last federal judge appointed by President Carter and confirmed by the Senate before the 1980 presidential election. Not even the usual pre-election political maneuvering could delay his appointment. An investiture ceremony was held in our Court on October 30, 1980, and Norman Ramsey commenced his new career as a federal judge.

Norman was a wonderful colleague who contributed in so many different ways to the work of our Court. For five of the years when he was a member of our bench, I was the Chief Judge. Norman served as Chairman of several of our Court committees, including the important Jury and Probation Committees. With knowledge of his remarkable career, I found myself going to him for wise counsel on sticky
questions that arose concerning the administration of the affairs of the court.

During the twelve years that he was a U.S. District Judge for the District of Maryland, Norman handled many important cases and wrote many significant opinions. A check of LEXIS has revealed 113 published opinions by him, 108 of which were District Court opinions and five of which were opinions written by Judge Ramsey as a member of a Fourth Circuit panel. These opinions represent only the visible tip of the hard and conscientious work undertaken by Norman during his twelve years on the bench. He resigned effective September 30, 1992, twelve years to the day from when he had been appointed by President Carter.

Both Norman Ramsey and I shared similar views on the concept of federalism. We were both strong believers in the principle of comity, posited on a proper respect by a federal court for state judicial proceedings. Our views in this regard are illustrated by O'Reilly v. County Board of Appeals for Montgomery County. In that case, Judge Ramsey dismissed a suit brought by an applicant for a taxicab license against the Montgomery County Board of Appeals under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. The Fourth Circuit reversed. The majority held that the doors to the federal courthouse should not be barred to a litigant pressing a basic constitutional claim even though the record indicated that the state court in Maryland may have already denied that claim. I was a member of that panel, and I dissented. I believed that the applicant had been given a full and fair opportunity to litigate the issue in state court, and that a federal court should not review a state court judgment for error but rather look only to its finality. In this particular case, the applicant had not appealed the state court's decision rejecting his constitutional claim, but instead had filed a § 1983 suit in federal court raising the same claim. Both Judge Ramsey and I believed that even if the state court had erred, the ultimate decision was one for the state court and not for the federal court to make.

Why did he leave the bench? It was a typically Norman Ramsey act. He knew that the law was much more than merely judging—it was trying cases; it was participating in state and local government. A judge's cloistered and confining life does not permit one to do these things. As a true Renaissance man, Norman Ramsey decided after twelve years as a federal judge to devote his considerable energies and

7. Id. at 792.
8. Id. at 793-94 (Harvey, J., dissenting).
talents to a wider range of legal activities. He returned to his beloved Semmes, Bowen & Semmes, which welcomed him with open arms. Tragically, his heart attack some six months after his resignation and his death two months later cut short a postjudicial career that could only have added luster to his remarkable record.

It might be said in jest that Norman Ramsey could not hold a steady job. At different times, he was employed as an Assistant U.S. Attorney, as a Deputy Attorney General, as a lawyer in a law firm, and as a Federal District Judge. Thank goodness that he did spread his talents around! There is little doubt that no member of the Bar in this community during the past forty years has come close to the record of Norman Ramsey as a judge, as a public servant, as a litigator, as a teacher, and as a bar association officer. As a judge, he had a scrupulous sense of fairness, and he cared deeply for those who sought justice. As a public servant, he understood the problems faced by state and local governments and the limitations that any governmental system places on public servants. As a practicing attorney, he had a wonderful vision of the law and what it could achieve. Integrity, industry, breadth of knowledge—these were his trademarks. Although he will be sorely missed, the example he set in the many fields of his endeavors will continue to inform and inspire all members of the legal community in the Maryland area.

FRANK A. KAUFMAN*

Judge Norman P. Ramsey, a stand-out among his contemporaries from very early in life, was a man of many seasons, endowed with a precise inquiring mind, an ability quickly to digest fact, law, and theory, and to appraise in a nutshell his fellow human beings.

My wife and I first had the pleasure of knowing Peg and Norman Ramsey in the early years following World War II. At that time, along with so many others, Norman and I were putting aside our war experiences and entering into the practice of law in Baltimore. It was an exciting new world, and Norman Ramsey loved every moment of it. He soon became known as one of the leaders in the general practice of law, in the trial courts, in bar association activities, and in extracurricular work, which included not only spin-offs of legal duties but an almost overwhelming immersement in charitable and general community programs. His interests included bar association musicals, in which he and Peg were lyricists and authors, as well as performers (and singers), as well as acceptance of assignments both in and out of

* Senior Judge, United States District Court for the District of Maryland.
government. As the years went on, he was named more and more frequently as a member—and often as chair—(called chairman in those blighted days of sex discrimination) of public, civic, and community based boards. While as far as I know, he never ran for office, his civic interests led him continuously to be active in supporting candidates and in taking stands on the crucial issues of the day.

His energy was boundless, as was his joy of life. He was a devoted husband and father of his daughters, of whom he was so proud. Somehow he managed to intermingle his professional, civic, community, and family lives without too much sacrifice to any of them.

His bar association activity areas first included young lawyers and then experienced lawyers in the City of Baltimore and in the State of Maryland. But at an early age, he also became a leader in the American Bar Association. That interest in the ABA lasted throughout the rest of his life and led to his serving a five-year term on the Board of Governors of the Association as he was nearing the peak of his career at the bar. In those days, he was prominently mentioned as a most probable president of the American Bar Association and indeed was close to the point of being elected president of the ABA if he had not, during the term of President Jimmy Carter, been named to the federal trial bench in Baltimore. His years on the bench showed a continuation of the drive and common sense that had sparkled during his career at the bar.

As one of his judicial colleagues, I had considerable opportunity to observe him. I think he enjoyed the challenges of the bench, but he also missed the practice of law—a practice that had brought him to the leadership of one of Baltimore’s oldest and most outstanding law firms. In that role, he had developed extremely close ties with partners, associates, and all connected with his law firm. Those relationships meant so much to him as did his relationships with a myriad of clients—at all levels of life. The bench, with its inhibitions and somewhat lonesome role, perhaps was a bit of a letdown from the exhilaration that he had known in private practice. Also, the restrictions of the bench prevented him from continuing to undertake so many important roles in government and in other activities that had earlier marked his career. And yet, he never dropped out of sight—he kept on top of his judicial duties from day one and still managed a very active community-based social life. He was devastated, after he came on the bench, by the death of his wife Peg, and then had the great fortune to marry happily a second time and to embark on a new life with Tucky—a life that led not only to activity in the Baltimore area, but also to considerable travel in the United States and abroad.
At the end of twelve years of tenure on the bench, Judge Ramsey went back to his old firm and returned to the practice of law. He was apparently just getting up a full head of steam in his resumed position as a leading legal practitioner when he was struck suddenly by the devastating medical blow that not long after caused his death.

Judge Ramsey will be known as a man who was both a client's lawyer, a lawyer's lawyer, a lawyer's judge, and a public citizen—as an attorney who believed in the integrity and the foundations of the law—as a human being who respected the rights of his fellow man in all stations and at all levels without regard to race, creed, color, nationality, or sex—a man who valued life and the rule of law as a basic underlying support for the most advanced way of living. That led him so naturally to practice law on a high level of intellectuality and of practicality and to conduct himself on the bench in a fair, decisive manner. With some judges and some lawyers, a review of their life at the Bar and in general, causes contemporaries who survive to stress some particular occurrence or some particular case involvement by the judge or the lawyer. In Norman Ramsey's case, some one like myself is left with the overall impression of a highly charged, able man who moved steadily day by day, on a strong, swift certain course of life and activity. In the few months since he has left us, he has been sorely missed. And he will continue to be so missed as the years roll on.

Norman Ramsey did not close his eyes to the ills of society. He was an optimist—a doer—a noncomplainer—an activist in the best sense of that word. Yet he deplored the lack of respect of citizens for their leaders—growing deficiencies in integrity on the part of too many of our leaders—the increased lack of professionalism within the Bar and among lawyers, and their concentration on treating their duties at the Bar in terms of making money, as if they were businessmen instead of professionals—their disrespectful and sometimes worse treatment of one another—their failure to live up to the standards of factual and legal research, and of common sense, and of decent behavior about which he had been taught as a young lawyer by the wise able partners of his old firm—such as John Semmes, Fred Brune, Eddie Morgan, and David Owen—to name only a few. He was not a man to sit back and yearn for the old days, but that did not prevent him from insisting on adherence to proper standards by all who appeared before him in court or who worked with him.

The judges of our Court, for many years, have met each Wednesday for lunch, brown-bagging it in the conference room of the Chief Judge. On many a Wednesday we heard Norman explosively spill over the brim with punctuated, colorful comments of experiences that he
had encountered since our previous Wednesday meeting. It would have been well if more people had heard, and been influenced by, those comments.

Each year a drove of new lawyers come to the bar. Their activity, in my view, is sorely needed by so many in our society who do not have the benefit of available, affordable legal services. Those newcomers—as well as their elders—could not select a better role model than Norman P. Ramsey.

MARY ARABIAN*

It was 1940 when my best friend, she was three and I was six when we first met, came to visit me at College Park. “Oh, you are so lucky,” she gushed. “Next year, when you enter law school, you’ll be in the same class as my love, my wonderful Norman.”

Indeed, he was in my class. And it was true; he was wonderful and smart. But then came World War II, and soon Norman joined the Marines. But not before he got me my first law connected job, replacing him as a title searcher, although the boss did have some hesitancy in hiring a female law student. Only Norman’s recommendation convinced him.

After Norman won his officer’s stripes, he and my best friend Peg got married. I was one of the bridesmaids. All day long on their wedding day, it rained, and rained. In fact, it poured. Then, just as we were about to leave for the church, the rain ceased. The clouds disappeared, and the sun broke through. It was a true omen of a life-long love match.

Finally, the war was over, and Norman returned from the Pacific to resume his interrupted education and to begin his phenomenal legal career. Peg had always said she wanted four boys. However, first came the twins, Peggy and Mary, bright, talented, and beautiful. I was chosen their godmother. Then came Chrissy, intelligent, sensitive, and beautiful. Then Amy arrived, smart, gifted, and beautiful. Before Amy was born, Peg acknowledged that it was right that she was the mother of girls and hoped for another girl. Peg was a superb mother, as Norm was a father. I shall always be grateful to them for allowing me to claim a little part of the girls as mine.

As the children were growing, Norm’s career was soaring. Still he always had time to be supportive of my career. When he became president of the Junior Bar Association, he appointed me as the first woman to serve on the Executive Committee of that association.

* Retired Judge, Baltimore City Circuit Court.
Following my appointment to the Municipal Court of Baltimore City in 1961, he acted as Chairman for my campaign for election. Throughout my professional and personal life, he has been my advisor, helper, and ally. The only complaint Peg had was that while she could tolerate all their male friends who were lawyers congregating at every occasion and talking of nothing but law, when her best friend did the same, it was the last straw.

Through the years, at the behest of my friend and former law partner, then Mayor Schaefer, I encouraged Norman to accept various Municipal posts, such as President of the Baltimore City School Board. That wasn’t doing Norman any favors; however, his skillful and superior service in all such positions brought great credit to Mayor Schaefer and was of tremendous benefit to the citizens of Baltimore.

It was during his term as School Board President, when his responsibilities were particularly onerous, that tragedy struck. Peg was diagnosed as having cancer, and given a short time to live. Instead of capitulating to the prognosis, she fought for four years. She was a fighter. Her gallantry in that period was a lesson for all of us who loved her.

Life goes on, and it was a joyous day when Norman was sworn in as a judge in the United States District Court for the District of Maryland. Another milestone in a life of enormous achievement. As the years passed, my dear friend Norman seemed sad, lonely, somewhat withdrawn—characteristics foreign to his personality. Then suddenly he was no longer sad, no longer withdrawn. Tucky, vivacious, energetic, and loving Tucky, had come into Norman’s life. Before the wedding, wise Tucky invited Norman’s close friends to a dinner party. My introduction to the bride-to-be. It was obvious that Norman was elated. Anyone who could make my friend Norm happy was aces with me. My family was intact again.

As an outstanding lawyer, public servant, jurist, and most importantly, as a warm family man and a loyal, sensitive friend, he gave true meaning to the designation The Honorable Norman P. Ramsey.

H. Thomas Howell*

A “lawyer’s lawyer” is an expression, overused but reverential, that our profession reserves for its very best. As applied to Norman P. Ramsey, it fits perfectly. To describe him as a lawyer’s lawyer is perhaps to state the obvious to those who knew him well. His devotion to

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the legal profession was an absolute passion. It enlisted the whole of his enormous talents, his amazing intelligence, his intuitive decency, and his unflagging sense of humor.

Indeed, Judge Ramsey's lifelong commitment to the pursuit of justice under the rule of law was the unifying theme of his outstanding career and his extraordinary service to his community, his State, and his Nation. He did it all—distinguished federal judge, superb trial lawyer, leader of the organized Bar, managing partner of an important law firm, law school lecturer, and public servant. And he did it all very well. He was always the one to whom his colleagues came for guidance before venturing into uncharted legal waters. In private practice as in public service, he was the one to whom the most difficult challenges were assigned by peers needing help or already in trouble. Invariably, their confidence in him was repaid by his skilled advocacy and fierce allegiance to the cause entrusted to him.

Will Rogers never met a man he didn't like. I never met a man or woman who didn't like Norman Ramsey. This extraordinary man earned the respect, admiration, and affection of virtually everyone touched by his professional life. The warm friendship and good will that he extended to everyone he encountered truly enhanced his reputation among the bench and Bar of Maryland. To a younger generation of law firm associates and law clerks, he served as the ideal mentor, thereby assuring that the full measure of his generous contributions to our profession will only be realized fully during the next millennium.

Extreme good fortune enabled me to practice law with Norman Ramsey and gain admission to his wide circle of friends. I will forever cherish the afternoon in the early spring of 1966 when he interviewed me for a job at Semmes, Bowen & Semmes, then as now one of Baltimore's oldest and largest law firms. He was already a legal giant in his prime and, as we spoke, was then under serious consideration for a vacancy on the United States District Court for the District of Maryland. Happily for me, the honor of that particular appointment went to another candidate and Norman Ramsey remained in private practice for another fourteen years. I was as much impressed with his radiant personality as with his intellectual brilliance and quickly signed on as a new associate with his firm. In 1972 I became his law partner.

It was my privilege to assist Norman Ramsey in a variety of cases, including the two landmarks that he argued before the Supreme
Our working relationship came to an end on October 30, 1980, when he took the oath as a U.S. District Judge. The strong bonds of our friendship continued intact over the years until death overtook him on June 15, 1993.

In struggling to overcome the loss of a great friend and remarkable human being by reflecting upon his lifetime record of accomplishments, I was comforted by the discovery that Norman P. Ramsey himself encountered difficulty in approaching such a sensitive task. Some years ago, writing a retirement tribute to a favorite law professor, he began with a confession:

Any attempt to reduce a distinguished career to an adequate recognition of the merits of an individual is a very serious challenge. The undertaking is rendered even more than hazardous when the subject is one whose talents and personality are widely known and appreciated. The peril always is that one who has made his impact on many generations of students and lawyers tends to occasion a subjective and emotional reaction which, in measuring a man, is more important than the objective facts which give rise to the final conclusion.

Be that as it may, I am unable to suppress entirely the “objective facts” that drive my subjective conclusions about Norman P. Ramsey. While respecting the wisdom of his advice, I must yield to my strong personal belief that the biographical record illuminates the mantle of greatness that cloaked the man, the lawyer, the jurist.

That record is all but legendary. The Pennsylvania birthplace of the future judge actually was named Fairchance. It is true that Norman P. Ramsey graduated from Towson High School at age sixteen. He attended Loyola College and, while still a teenager, enrolled at the University of Maryland School of Law. Among his classmates were William Donald Schaefer and Mary Arabian, with whom he formed vital, lasting friendships.

During World War II, as a Marine Corps officer, Lt. Ramsey saw combat in the Iwo Jima and Okinawa campaigns. He observed his twenty-third birthday in what remained of Nagasaki, as part of a Marine Corps detachment investigating the devastating effects of nuclear warfare. These grim wartime experiences undoubtedly forged the inner strength and self-confidence that later enabled him to meet

head-on the most daunting challenges encountered in his professional life.

Norman P. Ramsey returned home in time to sit for the bar examination and pass it with the fifth-highest score. In October 1946, he was admitted to the Maryland Bar while still a third-year law student and an associate editor of the *Maryland Law Review*. He graduated with highest honors and was awarded the Order of the Coif along with his LL.B. degree.

The first decade of Norman Ramsey's legal career was marked by four apprenticeships that counted heavily. First, he served as law clerk (1947-48) to Judge W. Calvin Chesnut, one of the most prominent federal jurists of his era, a member of the same United States District Court that later was to enlist Judge Ramsey. Second, as an Assistant U.S. Attorney (1948-50), he gained valuable experience as a federal prosecutor and learned quickly that the U.S. Government as a litigant occupies a special position and owes an unwavering obligation of fairness in all cases. Third, he became an associate of Semmes, Bowen & Semmes (1951-54) and thus initiated a twice-interrupted, thrice-renewed affiliation that endured the remainder of his life. His professional mentor and close friend, Rignal W. Baldwin, would precede him as a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and as president of the Maryland State Bar Association.

Finally, when Norman Ramsey left the firm in 1955 to accept appointment as an Assistant Attorney General of Maryland, he joined illustrious company. C. Ferdinand Sybert, the Attorney General, would later sit on the Court of Appeals of Maryland. The Deputy Attorney General was Harrison L. Winter (a classmate of Norman's), who was destined to become the Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. Upon the latter's resignation on July 1, 1955, Norman Ramsey succeeded him as Deputy Attorney General. At age thirty-two, he thus attained the State's highest nonelective office to which a lawyer could then aspire.

There were further summits for Norman Ramsey to climb. He did not always reach the top. On two occasions in 1964 and once more in 1967, a committee of the Maryland State Bar Association included his name on a list of qualified individuals recommended for appointment to Baltimore vacancies on the Court of Appeals of Maryland. Other candidates were appointed.
ously, his trial practice developed into one of the busiest in Maryland. He excelled in complex federal litigation, civil and criminal, but was also extremely active in representing clients in the state courts. The defense of public figures became his hallmark.  

Norman Ramsey shunned publicity. His "no comment" response to the news media was automatic. He went so far as to shield from members of his own law firm the identity of prominent clients seeking his advice. After indictments were handed down in the Mandel case, he circulated an internal memorandum divulging to his partners the well-kept secret that he had been representing Irving Kovens for over six months. The memo imposed a gag order, admonishing his partners to refrain from any discussion of the case.

What was remarkable about Norman Ramsey was not merely his demonstrated talents as a premier trial lawyer or even his ability to operate under a staggering caseload. Rather, in addition to those achievements, he worked tirelessly to improve the legal profession and the community at large. The biographical record thus provides some insight into the scope and diversity of his important but volunteered activities, often conducted simultaneously.

During his most productive years as a lawyer, Norman Ramsey served as the Maryland State Delegate to the American Bar Association (1960-75); sat in the ABA House of Delegates (1960-75) and then the Board of Governors (1975-78); was a member of the ABA Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary (1968-74), which considered the controversial Supreme Court nominations of Judges Clement F. Haynsworth and G. Harrold Carswell; chaired the ABA Standing Committee on Communications (1979-84); and likely would have become the ABA president-elect in 1982 if he had not accepted judicial office instead. He was elected as the president of the Maryland Bar Association (1973-74), having served as a long-time member of its Board of Governors (1963-75). He was lecturer at the University of Maryland School of Law (1954-71) in such diverse courses as insurance, pleading and practice, and agency. He served as president of the Legal Aid Bureau of Baltimore (1959-62) as well as the Library Company of the Baltimore Bar. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Public Defender System (1976-80). In addition to the American College
of Trial Lawyers, he was a fellow of the American Bar Foundation, the Maryland Bar Foundation, and the International Society of Barristers. Meanwhile, he held appointments under four successive mayors of Baltimore City, as chairman of the Civil Service Commission (1963-70), member of the Board of Ethics (1963-70, 1974-80), president of the Board of School Commissioners (1974-75), and the Board of Fire Commissioners (1980). A Democrat, he managed Mayor Schaefer's first campaign in 1971 and was the general chairman of the Mayor's successful bid for a third term in 1979.

This arid listing of accomplishments should not obscure the untiring and often thankless efforts and the substantive contributions of a dedicated professional. Norman Ramsey was hand-picked for each of these important and sensitive positions because of his vast store of knowledge, his negotiating skills, and his abundant energy. He drove himself relentlessly and operated under time constraints and qualitative standards that he alone could hope to fulfill. In every instance, he met the challenge entrusted to him.

As far as I know, Norman Ramsey had no special hobbies and certainly had little time for leisurely recreation. He was a voracious reader, of course, and was astonishingly well-informed on every subject that might arise in conversation. Despite his formidable work ethic, he was as well-rounded and sociable as anyone our profession has known. He was in constant demand as a keynote speaker or master-of-ceremonies. He was also a convivial raconteur, with an endless supply of stories and jokes suitable to the occasion. While caring deeply about the law, he luxuriated in the company of lawyers, judges, and legislators, and was beloved by them in return. As a mark of his popularity, he belonged to all of the law clubs—Lawyers' Round Table, Rule Day, Wednesday, and Wranglers. Rarely did he skip a meeting.

Above all, Norman Ramsey cherished his family. He adored his wife of thirty-five years, the former Margaret "Peg" Quarngesser, whom he married on April 15, 1944, and credited unreservedly as the key to his every success. Her untimely death on February 6, 1979, was a terrible loss to him and his family. Their four daughters—Peggy, Mary, Chris, and Ann—were nurtured in warmth and love as they matured into gifted and delightful adults.

In a real sense, Norman Ramsey reached a crossroads when he was notified in the summer of 1980 of his pending nomination to the United States District Court for the District of Maryland. He was then being urged by many colleagues to seek instead the presidency of the American Bar Association. I recall a humid Saturday evening in Hon-
NoRMAN PARK RAMSEY MEMORIAM

oluulu during the ABA convention, when we strolled from one state delegation to another. Wherever we went, someone in the delegation would call out his name, setting off a round of applause and cheers. I did not realize until then how much he was respected and appreciated beyond the borders Maryland.

Nevertheless, Norman Ramsey heeded President Carter's call to the federal bench. He was confirmed unanimously by the United States Senate on September 30, 1980, and sworn in a month later. That he was "exceptionally well qualified" for judicial office was the evaluation of the ABA Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary on which he had once served.

I have absolutely no doubt that Judge Ramsey lived up to that superlative assessment. Having never appeared in his courtroom, I cannot appraise his performance as a federal jurist. The judicial colleagues who honor his memory in this publication are far more qualified to do so. I defer to their judgments, but can offer two observations. First, in private and publicly, Judge Ramsey deplored the federal sentencing guidelines and "the injustices over which district judges are asked (or forced) to preside under current law and executive policy."5 Secondly, for all of his 100 or so well-crafted opinions published in the Federal Supplement, he took far greater pride in his guiding influence upon each of his law clerks. He followed their professional careers with intense personal interest. Those clerks and his devoted secretary, Melanie Matusek, all became welcome additions to Norman Ramsey's extended family.

Far from withdrawing from public life, Norman Ramsey soon offered proof that a federal judge need not be reclusive. On July 10, 1982, he was married to the former Tucky Patz Heller. She became his blithe spirit and rekindled his joie de vivre. Together they championed the cause of underprivileged children and touched many young lives. They went everywhere, worldwide, and enjoyed each minute of it. Their happiness was boundless and is eternal.

On October 1, 1992, upon his retirement from the federal judiciary, Norman Ramsey returned once more to Semmes, Bowen & Semmes to resume private practice. He became the firm's general counsel and good-will ambassador. Within a few months he went to trial and obtained a favorable result for his client. It was the final

triumph of the quintessential lawyer's lawyer. We shall be lucky to see his like again.

LAWRENCE E. WALSH*

Sometimes a lawyer can be appraised by his standing with lawyers outside of his own state. Judge Ramsey was one of those lawyers. He was well-known, well-liked, and admired. He was particularly valuable where the responsibilities of the legal profession rub shoulders with those of politics and government in the public service. In a profession frequently regarded as conservative, he was a leader of those who visualized an expanded role and responsibility. Respect for his ability and his integrity was such that he was one of the most popular as well as one of the most respected of those active in the American Bar Association.

Judge Ramsey and I were both members of the House of Delegates, serving together for several years. Our most important work together was carried out as members of the ABA Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary and as members of the ABA Board of Governors. We served together on the Committee from the summer of 1968 until the summer of 1972. The committee reported to the Deputy Attorney General of the United States on the professional standing of persons under consideration for nomination to the federal bench. Except for nominees to the Supreme Court, these names were given the committee before a nomination was submitted. This enabled the committee to obtain the views of other lawyers with a minimum of publicity and embarrassment to the potential nominee. Judge Ramsey represented the Fourth Circuit.

The committee was one of the hardest working committees of the association as well as one of the most prestigious. In the four-year period we served together, over 400 reports were submitted on potential nominees who were referred to the committee. The committee members were dependent upon each other for an accurate statement of facts and opinions regarding nominees outside their own district. During the four-year period, the President submitted 191 nominations to the Senate. In no case did the President nominate any person who was not found at least qualified by the committee.

Judge Ramsey's work during these four years was carefully scrutinized by his fellow committee members—all experienced litigators in their circuits. The reputation of all depended upon each other.

There were no restraints upon the severity of criticism to which a reporting member might be subjected. Judge Ramsey's views invited confidence, and they were regularly followed by the committee.

One of the most difficult tests was perhaps that presented by the nomination of Chief Judge Haynsworth of the Fourth Circuit to the Supreme Court. He had been on the conservative side in early civil rights litigation, and he had been required to write opinions not well received by organized labor. Judge Ramsey, although forward-looking in both fields, concluded that Chief Judge Haynsworth was exceptionally well-qualified for appointment to the Supreme Court. His views carried a strong majority of the Committee, and they were strongly presented to the Senate Judiciary Committee during his confirmation hearing. Ultimately, political forces prevailed and the nomination was rejected. Chief Judge Haynsworth then continued to serve on the Court of Appeals for many years with distinction, demonstrating to the Bar of his court and to the Bar of the nation the soundness of Judge Ramsey's solid nonpolitical evaluation.

Subsequently, the Committee came under more serious criticism when, under pressure from the Senate for a quick report, it reported as qualified for the Supreme Court a Court of Appeals Judge from another circuit. The rejection of this nomination caused the committee to make extensive and drastic revision of its procedures for dealing with Supreme Court nominees. Judge Ramsey was valuable in the discussions that led to the ultimate adoption of these more appropriate procedures.

My second close working relationship with Judge Ramsey came when he was a member of the ABA Board of Governors during the year I was president, 1975-76. This immersed Judge Ramsey in a much different group. Whereas the members of the Judiciary Committee were picked by the president because of their extensive litigation experience, members of the Board of Governors were elected by the House of Delegates. They were more broadly selected, usually after many years in the House of Delegates and in the give and take of ABA controversy. Although Judge Ramsey had just come on the board during my year as president, I selected him as chairman of one of the four board subcommittees—the committee on association planning. This was a committee concerned with the Association's service to the public rather than with the internal administration of the profession or the ABA itself.

During this year, the Association developed several public interest programs, two of them particularly important: The first was The Commission on Law and the Economy, which brought together outstand-
ing lawyers and economists who formulated a recommendation that was ultimately accepted by President Carter for deregulation of certain industries. The second was a three-day conference of selected judges, lawyers, and teachers for a broad review of the reasons for the public discontent with the administration of justice. The conference commemorated the seventieth anniversary of Roscoe Pound’s brilliant analysis of the same subject. Many of the excellent recommendations of this conference have since been accepted and put into practice.

On the Board of Governors, there was a constant tension between those who believed in expanded Association programs and those who viewed their responsibility more narrowly and more conservatively. Judge Ramsey was a consistent supporter of the broader view and an able and effective one. Ultimately, he was one of a handful seriously considered for the presidency of the Association. Before this movement culminated, he was appointed to the bench and, thus, for all practical purposes became ineligible.

After a career of public service and successful private practice, his district court appointment was a fitting recognition and a satisfying conclusion for his outstanding career. A United States Court in an important and busy commercial district presents an ever-varying and ever-interesting array of cases fully absorbing even for Judge Ramsey’s questing mind. He tried with dispatch and without error an important Iran/Contra case. Those who have had the privilege of appearing before him know the pleasure of being in his court: a court that ran smoothly and effectively, governed with courtesy, sparked by the skill of a former outstanding advocate, and committed, simply and unpretentiously, to the public service.

CRAIG B. MERKLE*

Norman Ramsey was a Natural. He was to the law what Roy Hobbs was to baseball: naturally talented and uniquely gifted, a hero who could elevate those around him to the highest levels of performance. Unlike the mythical baseball hero, however, Judge Ramsey was not the fiction of a talented imagination. He was the product of a brilliant mind coupled with a commitment and devotion to the law and tempered by a genuine affection for and understanding of the human condition. He could play any position. He could hit any pitch. A more natural lawyer, judge, public servant, and friend is hard to imagine.

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The most important legacy of Norman Ramsey is that he showed us what was possible. He showed us that a lawyer can reach the height of his profession without abandoning the principles of honesty and decency. He showed us that a public servant does not need to have a public ego. He showed us the power of confidence and good humor. He showed us not only what he was capable of, but in so doing, he revealed to us what we all are capable of. He made us all better, and we always wanted to be at our best when we were with him.

My fondest memories of Norman Ramsey are as one of his judicial law clerks more than a decade ago. On November 1, 1991, a portrait of The Honorable Norman P. Ramsey was presented to the United States District Court for the District of Maryland. I had the honor that day of delivering the following comments, which I can only hope will in some small way contribute to the living portrait of Judge Ramsey to which this issue of the *Maryland Law Review* is dedicated:

On behalf of the twenty-two former and current law clerks to The Honorable Norman P. Ramsey, it is our great honor to present and dedicate this portrait. A portrait is defined as the likeness of a person usually made from life. Although this portrait most certainly is made from life, by itself, it does not begin to represent the full likeness of Judge Ramsey. From our view as his law clerks, the likeness of Judge Ramsey was not one of master and servant, nor was it one of judge and judged, but rather it was one of teacher and pupil, of mentor and mentee, and of parent and child. For us his chambers became more a home than an office, and he and Tucky welcomed us openly and completely into their judicial family. We feel the pride of children today watching their hero.

The full likeness of Judge Ramsey from our perspective must begin with his name, and although this painting will one day bear the nameplate of The Honorable Norman P. Ramsey, to each of us he is known fondly as “the Judge.” With apologies to the many other honorable jurists present here today, in our mind’s eye he is the only judge.

The portrait of Judge Ramsey must also include his enormous sense of humor and his perspective on things important and things not:

If we spilled the water pitchers, we acquired the nickname of Gunga Din.

If we were caught shoeless in chambers, we were threatened with being traded to other judges for future draft choices and a law clerk to be named later.
When a typographical error in a memorandum opinion banned sex in Prince George’s County, we were admitted to his Hall of Fame, not to his Hall of Shame.

When we cried him onto the bench to the sounds of “All here, all here, all here,” rather than “Oyez, oyez, oyez,” he answered anyway and politely took his place on the bench.

When we fell head-over-heels out of our chair into the well of the court during the middle of a trial, he simply peered up over the bench and asked, “Are you all right?”

Thanks to Judge Ramsey we are all right. He listened patiently and thoughtfully to our views whether we were advocating acquittal or the death penalty. We were truly awed by his knowledge of the law ranging from patents to torts, from leases to wiretaps, from antitrust to zoning, and covering subjects we simply prayed we would never see on a bar examination. We really did not need a library. He was LEXIS and WestLaw rolled into one.

This portrait, this likeness of Judge Ramsey must include the fairness and wisdom of his judgment. It must include his incomparable insight into the human condition and it must include his integrity and remoteness from outside influences. Litigants hoping to achieve an undue advantage over an opponent in his courtroom found no safe harbor there.

The full likeness of Judge Ramsey must also reflect the enduring influence that his judgeship has brought to the lives of those he has touched. As his law clerks we watched and learned his passion for fair play and his passion for just results. He taught us, by example, the value of making even the most routine functions meaningful.

Lawyers who came before him for admission to this great Bar were reminded of their place alongside the legal giants of history. They also were reminded of their responsibility to return to the community some measure of that which they extracted daily.

When new citizens came before him for the oath of naturalization, Judge Ramsey not only made them Americans, he made them feel like Americans.

It is a great honor on behalf of my fellow law clerks to present and dedicate this portrait, this likeness of Judge Ramsey. I am sorry that we are only able to leave in this courtroom today a painting, because the true portrait of Judge Ramsey, of “our Judge” is painted not on the canvas of the artist, but it is painted on the fabric of our hearts, and on the hearts of all those who came to this courthouse seeking
justice and found themselves before The Honorable Norman P. Ramsey. It is that portrait we also dedicate here today.

Frederic N. Smarkin*

When I was asked to contribute some reflections on the late Judge Norman P. Ramsey, I immediately started to think about how I could possibly capture the essence of that remarkable man in a few words. Ideally, a word portrait should have the same effect as a painted portrait—to allow someone who never met its subject to feel as if he had. And where is the first place you look when you encounter a portrait? It is, of course, the eyes.

Those unforgettable blue eyes of Norman Ramsey. They were unique. You could read Norm by his eyes; they were truly the windows to his inner being. When he laughed, they sparkled. When he concentrated, they narrowed. When he mused upon one of life's (or the law's) little absurdities, such as the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, they grew wide with amazement. And when he focused them upon someone who merited his rebuke, they betrayed their owner's indignation.

But when he reminisced, you could see him looking right through the present, into the past. It came alive for him, as if he were watching it replayed on a screen. And what reminiscences he had! Many of them have been set down by Norm himself, or have been retold by other people; others have not been.

I remember, in particular (because it coincided with my father's early days in practice in Towson), his recollection of a certain group of then-young Towson lawyers, all of whom later achieved great prominence at the Baltimore County Bar. Norm got to know them before the Second World War, when he was a soda jerk at Asbill's venerable establishment in the Towson Masonic Building. Norm recalled that these up-and-coming lions of the Towson Bar seemed to spend most of their time in Asbill's, nursing nickel Cokes and reading the well-thumbed editions on the magazine rack, carefully restoring them to their places when finished. Every now and then, though, one of them would get a call over the pay phone, which would spark him to run out the back and up the stairs, abandoning both Coke and Collier's. The caller would be the lawyer's secretary, informing him that a real, live client had come calling. As soon as the young lawyer was ensconced with proper dignity in his inner office—though breathless from his run up the back stairs—the client would be shown in, with

* Judge, United States District Court for the District of Maryland.
apologies for having been kept waiting. Norm thought this wasn’t a bad way to make a living and to keep in shape, all things considered, so he decided to give it a go. The record of what happened afterward is spread before you elsewhere in this Law Review.

But anyone who knew him well could recount enough of Norm’s reminiscences to fill several law review volumes, and besides, there is always some ineffable quality lost in the second-hand telling of another person’s memories.

So, I turn to what there was about Norm that lies beneath any surface portraiture, whether by words or by more visual media, that could make the viewer conversant with the essence of the man. I think, in Norm’s case, it has to do with that essential part of the art of law practice wrapped up in the words “Counsellor-at-Law.”

Certainly, Norm was not unique in bearing that title. Like the title “Esquire,” at least in this country, the title “Counsellor-at-Law” is an honorific that goes along with one’s having survived the rituals and rigors of law school and the bar exam. The lawyer admitted to the Bar yesterday is just as entitled to style herself “Counsellor-at-Law” as the practitioner who first appeared before Judge Chesnut, now dead thirty years. And, no doubt, some of those admitted yesterday are capable of giving quite satisfactory counsel, while long years at the Bar do not necessarily guarantee soundness of advice.

Although I didn’t have the privilege of knowing Norm in his first years at the Bar, I think he was in the category of those few “born lawyers” whose advice is sound legally and morally, and, most of all, makes common sense, right from the beginning. Certainly, by the time he rose to prominence at the Baltimore Bar, his reputation for giving sound counsel (not to mention his reputation as an outstanding trial lawyer) drew clients of all descriptions, and in all manner of difficulties, to his door at Semmes, Bowen & Semmes.

But Norm’s role as an advisor went far beyond just advising clients. He was not only a counsellor at law, but also a counsellor in law. I don’t think I ever met a lawyer associated with Norm in his Semmes days who didn’t look upon him as a personal mentor of the finest kind, taking a genuine interest in the professional and personal lives and problems of every young attorney. And, of course, it is well-known that Mayor (and later Governor) Schaefer frequently sought out and relied upon the advice and counsel of his long-time friend Norman Ramsey, who put out practically every fire that vexed the Mayor. In fact, Norm’s services in putting out the City’s fires were not just figurative, but also literal—the Mayor once put him in charge of the Fire Board!
Even after he became a District Judge, Norm’s advice and counsel was sought out by, and lovingly bestowed upon, his extended courthouse family, in which I was fortunate enough to be counted.

Perhaps the days are gone when a young lawyer can be lucky enough to have someone like Norman Ramsey to teach what the practice of law can be like in its rarest form, when the giving of counsel approaches pure art. I confess to harboring a fear that worship of the golden calves of billable hours and bottom lines may well have pushed that rare life form so beautifully exemplified by Norman Ramsey to the brink of extinction. I think Norm also harbored a similar fear, that those coming after him in the practice of law were enjoying less and less of an opportunity to develop their talents fully. But, certainly, Norm’s love of his profession kept him from succumbing to that fear.

I can think of no finer tribute to his memory than to say that, if the highest traditions of the practice of our profession survive, it will only be because young practitioners will have had the benefit of someone like Norm showing them that the law can be practiced with consummate skill and utter integrity. I only wish he were still here to do it himself.

WILLIAM DONALD SCHAEFER*

Norman Ramsey was a friend, adviser, and my legal idol until the day he died. He had a good life, enjoyed himself, and he helped people. I appreciated how he helped me, especially when I was Mayor and counted on him for the things no one else could do. I wouldn’t just ask him to do any job, but I would save for him the difficult jobs because he always came through for me.

I remember seeking him out when there was trouble in the Baltimore City schools and I needed a strong leader to ease racial tension. He approached the situation in his inimitable style, moving everyone away from prejudices. He had a calming effect, and the incident showed why people had so much confidence in him. He was competent as a diplomat and caring as a person.

Norman’s true love was the law. He had great insight into the law, loved to study it, and dispensed it with passion. When you think about the law, you think of Norman Ramsey and all he contributed to it as a lawyer and as a judge.

Finally, Norman was a wonderful individual—warm, jovial, always in good spirits and just a fun guy. He was fortunate to have two wonderful marriages, and I know he was happy. Norman can be bestowed

* Governor of the State of Maryland.
with what is perhaps the highest accolade that can be bestowed on someone: he was the kind of man you don’t forget. And I never will.

RANDY H. LEE*

My professional association with Norman Ramsey was the briefest to be described among these tributes. Though at his death we had been acquainted for twenty-five years, only the first four of those saw us in regular contact with one another as lawyers. He was a partner at Semmes, Bowen & Semmes when I began a clerkship there in 1968 and became an associate in 1969. In 1972, when about halfway up the associate’s side of the letterhead, I left Semmes in favor of what was to have been a couple of years on loan to the Attorney General’s office. Throughout my brief time at Semmes, I had the privilege and pleasure of helping Norman Ramsey on a number of criminal and civil cases, and with some of his substantial office practice. Though I enjoyed all of my work at the firm, working for Norm Ramsey was simply different from working for any other partner or senior associate in the office.

The difference that was most obvious was one that was, paradoxically, difficult to describe. It was clear that he was the partner, you were the associate, and you were working for him. But it never felt like that. It felt like you were working with him rather than for him. His attitude, his style with his associates, could momentarily suspend the hierarchical facts of law firm life for the specific and professional purpose of doing the best possible job for a client.

Another difference was the clients. Though it was often noted during his lifetime—and has been more often noted since his passing—that Norman was a lawyer’s lawyer, that characterization is less insightful than it is simple recognition of the judgment made by the marketplace. Many lawyers were served professionally by Norm Ramsey, and many of his nonlawyer clients who were well-known in the community were referred to him by other lawyers who respected his ability in high profile matters. For an associate, this made things exciting as well as interesting.

At the same time, the uniqueness of Norman’s clientele proved how amazing his demeanor with his associates was. After a full workday, you might be at home, watching the late evening news, or looking at the early edition of the next day’s Baltimore Sunpapers you had picked up, and you would see stories about one or two (occasionally several) things that you knew Norman to be deeply involved in even

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though you were not working on them with him. Big and important events had clearly been a part of the Ramsey time sheet that day. Yet you could clearly recall, only hours earlier at the office, having had a casual conversation with him, and there was then no hint that all these other events were whirling in his mind and around his (always clean) desk. Norman Ramsey was as intense as any lawyer, as tough as a good litigator has to be. But his manner of keeping multiple lines of focused intensity running simultaneously, in parallel formation or different directions, bordered on the mysterious to one as new at the game as I was. And I now realize that the mere fact that his clients (assumedly a rather more demanding lot, in keeping with their community visibility, than those of other lawyers) were not, at these important points in the handling of their affairs, ringing his phone off the desk or sitting anxiously in the lobby also spoke volumes about the esteem in which he was held. If Norman P. Ramsey was your lawyer, you had the best representation available, and your lawyer never failed to keep you fully informed on what was happening. There was no reason to be bothering him, for things had to be under control.

He was always calm, but never slow. He never plodded, but was always methodical. You could actually see outward signs of his mental machinery at work: the sparkle in his eyes turned to a steely glint, and he might briefly look away only quickly to return his eyes to yours in a way that foretold the importance of what he was about to say, ask, or suggest.

As a trial lawyer, Norm Ramsey was a principled pragmatist; willing to attempt only that which was realistic, he chose the option he preferred without apparent anguish and nearly always to useful effect. This was the first litigator I had worked for and sat with at counsel table. At that time, I did not know these talents were possessed by only a very few. Exposure since departing Semmes has been more than sufficient to prove that there are not many Norm Ramseys. Reflection on the work I watched him do and the work I have now been able to watch others do has yielded the belief that what Norm Ramsey had that others do not—or at least do not in the same measure—was the capacity to keep both theory and fact operating simultaneously in the foreground. I do not believe Norman searched for theories that would fit facts, or vice versa. He didn’t have to. Somehow, for him, theory and fact were in a constant, conscious, synergistic, sifting process.

One of Norm Ramsey’s favorite sayings, spoken often to associates—or, at least to me—was “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” For the first year of hearing this, I didn’t think about it at
all. It was an aphorism. Repetition made it clear, however, that to its
speaker it was more talisman than aphorism, and I started to pay atten-
tion. At the same time, I was learning that preparation was at least
one hundred percent of the secret to professional success, and at
some point it came clear that Norman’s phrase was his creed of prepa-
ration, and explained so much about his ability. I had been to law
school outside the state, but had, early on, heard stories about what a
good teacher Norman had been in adjunct and lectureship roles at
the University of Maryland School of Law. Now I realize that his
teaching skills had been at least as well-employed in the office. He was
a natural, he knew what worked, and he had prepared me for the step
beyond mere recognition of the importance of preparation.

The experience other associates had with Norman Ramsey can-
not have been much different. It was an experience in the demands
of professionalism and the true meaning of that word. Much is spo-
ken and written today about professionalism—what it means, how to
instill it, how to require it. Those privileged to have spent some time
with Norman P. Ramsey, Esquire, know far more about it than they
would have known without the exposure. I am sure I speak for many
when I extend—too late—this word of thanks to my greatest teacher.

LYNNE A. BATTAGLIA*

I first met Norman Ramsey over twenty years ago, in the summer
of 1973. I was a summer associate at the Baltimore law firm of
Semmes, Bowen & Semmes, where Norman was a high-powered litiga-
tion partner. Norman, I soon learned, was the reason that many of
the litigation associates, the cream of their respective law school
classes, had chosen employment at Semmes. To work with him was
always exiting, and there were many associates vying for the opportu-
nity to learn from a master.

After law school, I became a Semmes associate. At that time, Nor-
man’s presence at the firm was larger than life. All the associates
talked about him and reveled in war stories about his many high pro-
file cases. Those who had played bit parts in these legal battles were
justifiably proud of their small contributions. I could hardly wait for
my chance. My first opportunity to work for Norman came in the
form of some fairly mundane research. Nonetheless, wanting to make
the best impression, I double- and triple-checked my entire work
product before taking it to him. He greeted me in his corner office.
The space was impeccable. He was so well-organized that every docu-

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ment was literally at his fingertips. He knew as much about my project as I did. He seemed in complete control. Even though he was light years ahead of the associates who struggled to match his grasp of the issues, he was always cordial. Our respect for him was not born of intimidation.

As a second-year associate, I finally got the opportunity to work with Norman as second chair on one of his cases. It was a domestic relations matter in which we represented the husband, a peculiar sort with some odd ideas about the marital relationship. I painstakingly researched all the legal issues, and as my reward, Norman allowed me to assist him in preparing to depose the wife. I thoroughly digested everything we had learned about the case and sat down with Norman to discuss strategy. I was surprised to discover that, unlike other partners, who expected to be briefed completely in the moments before a deposition, Norman wanted to talk about our plan for questioning. He asked for and listened to my suggestions and seemed truly interested in my life experiences and how they helped form my impressions of the case. After our talk, I drafted the deposition plan with which he was most comfortable. He wanted only an outline of major subject areas, not a list of questions. This allowed him to shape the inquiry as only he could.

At the deposition, I was amazed at Norman’s organizational ability. He framed his questions masterfully. Using our outline, he covered each area thoroughly and then moved to the next with no breaks in continuity. He politely but tenaciously followed each line of inquiry to its completion. I have never forgotten that day and the seamless manner in which Norman asked the questions. Even now, when I begin a direct examination, I emulate Norman’s performance, and in doing so, I feel that my old mentor is still with me.

I also remember that on that day, the deponent spent quite some time describing her husband’s (our client’s) eccentricities. I was particularly amused to learn of our client’s requirement that his wife fill out a voucher each time she took money from the household petty cash fund. Back at the firm, Norman kidded me, claiming that my inability to keep a straight face almost ruined the deposition by setting him off into laughter. Norman never forgot that episode. For years, he was fond of telling people that “Lynnie” (his affectionate name for me) “has to learn to keep a poker face.”

During the time I was at Semmes, I often asked Norman about his representation of Marvin Mandel associate Irv Kovens in Federal District Court. Norman believed in his client and was passionate about proving Kovens’s innocence. When Kovens seemed to be losing at
every turn, Norman fought all the harder, asserting every legitimate, available defense. As with all his cases, Norman gave more than was expected in his own work and expected nothing less from those working with him. With his customary thoroughness, he left no stone unturned in the zealous representation of his client.¹

It was Norman's passion for the Kovens case that sparked my interest in going to work at the U.S. Attorney's Office. Although he mistrusted the Kovens prosecutors, his zest for the litigation process whetted my appetite for that arena. In 1978, with Norman's blessing and recommendation, I left the firm to join the U.S. Attorney's staff as an Assistant U.S. Attorney.

As I began to try cases myself, I saw less of Norman. But each time I faced a new courtroom challenge, I stopped to think how he might handle the situation—how Norman would phrase the question or counter the argument. I did see him at Bar functions and on social occasions. He still called me "Lynn" and enjoyed retelling stories of our work together. As my career progressed, I could always count on Norman for advice, counsel, and whatever help he could offer.

The last time I saw Norman, we were both teaching a professionalism course for new Bar admittees. As always, he called me Lynn and engaged in some good-natured kidding as we reminisced about my early days at Semmes. I was quite taken that day with his willingness, at that state in his distinguished career, to devote an entire day to mentoring new lawyers. For my part, I found myself wanting to tell the new attorneys about Norman, because his career was the very embodiment of the professionalism we were there to impart. His devotion to high principles and his courtesy to colleague and adversary alike were enlivened by a charm and wit that are rare in our profession. I will miss him.

JAMES R. MILLER, JR.*

When I think of Norman P. Ramsey, I see in my mind a warm, laughing individual with an enormous sense of humor, an unmatched sense of integrity, and an exuberant zest for life. He was all of those things.

He was, in addition, almost an icon to lawyers and judges in this State, as well as around the country. He epitomized the image of an

¹ Kovens was found guilty following a hard-fought trial in 1977. The Fourth Circuit affirmed the convictions. United States v. Mandel, 591 F.2d 1347 (4th Cir.) (en banc), aff'd on reh'g, 602 F.2d 653 (4th Cir. 1979) (en banc), cert. denied, 445 U.S. 961 (1980).

* Of Counsel, Miller, Miller & Canby, Rockville, Maryland. Former Judge, United States District Court for the District of Maryland.
ideal judge during his twelve years as a Judge of the United States District Court for the District of Maryland. He was decisive, quick, even-tempered, astute, learned, good humored, fair, and patient. His portrait on the wall in the Ceremonial Courtroom of the United States Court House in Baltimore captures the dynamic and decisive nature of Judge Ramsey’s personality.

He will be remembered not only for his service to society as an outstanding trial judge. As a human being, Norman was also exemplary. Although he held with distinction many important titles and governmental and professional offices, he himself was not impressed with titles, station, or self-importance. He had a way of making every woman, man, and child with whom he came into contact feel important, and he truly regarded each of them as important. He could make anyone feel at ease in almost any situation. He had an endless supply of jokes and anecdotes, which he used to illustrate his points or ease tensions, as might be appropriate.

It is my personal good fortune to have known Norm Ramsey as a treasured friend and colleague on the federal trial bench in Maryland. It is our collective good fortune to have had this outstanding man in positions of leadership in Baltimore City, in the State of Maryland, and in many areas of our Nation. His boundless energy allowed him to accomplish many things that have enriched and improved our communities. He was able to do all this while giving time, love, and support to his family.

We will seldom see his like again.

BRENDAN V. SULLIVAN, JR.*

As I contemplated writing this Memoriam of Judge Norman P. Ramsey, I spoke with many people who admired him, loved him, and some who shaped their own professional character by emulating him. Some of these people knew him only by reputation, and some knew him for nearly fifty years. Certain descriptions of Judge Ramsey were repeated in these conversations:

- a lawyer’s lawyer;
- a giant of a man;
- a hard worker;
- a role model;
- a powerful advocate;
- a man who loved being a lawyer.

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In this Memoriam, we honor a lawyer and a judge who epitomizes the very best of the legal profession and the judiciary. It is said that we need heroes; it is especially true that we need heroes in law. In Judge Ramsey we found one.

Over the last decade and perhaps culminating in the most recent presidential campaign, I have been shocked by the endless torrent of bitter criticism against lawyers and judges. Research shows that this problem has historical roots. Lawyers are not beloved; in fact, they have been viewed with disdain throughout history.

The philosopher Plato said the lawyer's "soul is small and unrighteous . . . having no soundness in him." Abraham Lincoln wrote: "There is a vague popular belief that lawyers are necessarily dishonest . . . the impression is common—almost universal." More's Utopia had no lawyers. George Washington provided that, if a dispute arose out of his will, three arbitrators would resolve the matter without hearing lawyers. Carl Sandburg wrote: "[W]hen the lawyers are through, what is there left . . . can a mouse nibble at it and find enough to fasten a tooth in."

These views seemed to take a dramatic turn for the worse in the 1980s. A couple of years ago, former White House Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater said: "Lawyers certainly deserve all the criticism they can get." Fitzwater was asked whether his response reflected his own feelings or those of the President. He replied, "Those are universally held feelings by everyone who has ever dealt with the legal establishment."

Such attitudes can be very depressing to those of us who entered what we thought was an honorable profession and who have spent our lives as advocates in a system that we know is the best devised by man. So, what do we say to the critics who seem so intent on tearing us down, ridiculing what we do, and laughing at our system? I say to them: Did you know Norman Ramsey? In this day and age, the search for heroes in law becomes even more important. Indeed, such heroes are the only answer to our critics.

And so, who is this man we remember?

The Lawyer

The breadth of Judge Ramsey's experience was stunning. If Norman Ramsey had been a baseball player, he would have been the only major leaguer ever to play all nine positions. Judge Ramsey performed—with extraordinary skill—every job the law has to offer. He was:

- a law clerk to a distinguished judge;
• a teacher of law;
• an Assistant Attorney General;
• a prosecutor in one of the finest U.S. Attorney's offices in the country;
• a criminal defense lawyer;
• a plaintiff's counsel in civil litigation;
• a defense counsel as well;
• a federal district judge; and, just to make it exactly nine jobs,
• occasionally an appellate judge in the Fourth Circuit.

What else could Judge Ramsey have done? The U.S. Marshal position was taken. And throughout the entire adventure of his legal career, he also was:

• a devoted husband to Peg, and later to Tucky;
• a loving father to his daughters;
• a civic leader; and
• a guiding light within the Bar.

Twenty-two years ago, I came to Baltimore for the first time. I was there mostly to carry the brief cases of my now departed partners, Paul Connolly and Edward Bennett Williams. I heard of Norman Ramsey then; Ed and Paul spoke of him with great respect. I came to learn that Norm Ramsey, like my partners, was a role model for so many of us as we began our careers.

As the years passed, our paths sometimes crossed, and I had the opportunity to see firsthand the quality of Norm as a lawyer. His reputation was extraordinary even twenty-two years ago, and unlike so many other reputations that, over time, became tarnished by the strain of life's daily battles, Norman's reputation for excellence, honesty, and dependability only grew.

_The Judge_

Eventually, Norman Ramsey, Esquire, became The Honorable Norman P. Ramsey. And by the time he took the oath at age 58, Norm already had gathered more than one full lifetime's worth of experience. It is striking to note the contrast between Norman Ramsey's appointment to the bench and the frightening trend in recent years of appointing youthful lawyers with finely tuned ideologies—some with little or no experience either in law or in life. By the time Judge Ramsey was made a judge, he had already lived a full life:

• He knew the agony of defeat and the exhilaration of victory.
• He understood the pain experienced by clients and their families.
• He knew what was possible in the law and what was not.
• He experienced injustice firsthand and the frustration of being unable to right every wrong.

Judge Ramsey brought the full range of his life experience to bear in his service on the bench, and he served with a degree of compassion and insight uncommon among younger and less-experienced members of the judiciary. Into whose hands would you rather entrust your life and your reputation?

The trademark of Norm’s judgeship was fairness. This is the principal ingredient of justice. Norman Ramsey had a special, wonderful, stubborn streak that did not tolerate injustice. I saw that characteristic best described by the author of a book about the legendary Clarence Darrow. The same words describe Norman Ramsey exactly: He had “the capacity to sense injustice and take a stand against it in the form of I will be destroyed rather than submit. It is rudimentary anger, a capacity to muster all one’s power and assert it against what one experiences as unfair. However it may be confounded—or covered up—or counterfeited, this elemental capacity to fight against injustice remains the distinguishing characteristic” of the man.

Fairness was an instinct Norman Ramsey developed as a lawyer. It was the moral compass which guided his judgeship. Fairness was the guiding principle in his courtroom. To Norman Ramsey, fairness was:

• remembering everyday what it was like to be on the other side of the bench;
• remembering that a lawyer’s heart pounded like the kettle drum at the symphony while awaiting an imminent decision;
• remembering the agony of a defendant when his freedom hung in the balance;
• remembering that decisions have to be made and opinions written because parties in litigation wake up wondering whether the decision will be made today, and they go to sleep at night wondering whether it will be tomorrow;
• knowing that it is not enough to be fair; that one must also appear to be fair.

It was this remembering that made Norman Ramsey a great judge. But it was not easy. In fact, it may have been the most difficult task of all. So much patience is required, so much tedium must be endured. A judge must sometimes wonder whether he is a prisoner within his own courtroom—only seeming to be in charge, yet forced to sit through proceedings that take five times longer than they should.
Chief Justice Marshall must have experienced that pain when he said: "The acme of judicial distinction means the ability to look a lawyer straight in the eyes for two hours and not hear a word he says."

Every day for more than a decade, the Bailiff would announce the start of court with the words: "The Honorable Norman Ramsey presiding." Many are honorable, but only a few are fair. He was one of the fair ones. There is no greater accolade for one whose duty is to do justice. In time, we could list twenty-five adjectives to describe the qualities of a great judge, but fairness encompasses all of them. It eludes so many—but it came so easily to Norman Ramsey.

Power does strange things to most men, but not to Norman Ramsey. It frequently gives birth to arrogance, but not so in Norman. When one is granted extraordinary power, it takes strong character and wisdom to counterbalance it, to control it, to focus it for good. It is much like nuclear energy: if properly contained and controlled, it can heat a city or drive a submarine around the world; if not properly channelled, it can be destructive.

After twenty-five years in the courtroom, I've come full circle in my understanding of fairness. As a young lawyer, I was convinced that our system itself assured fairness because its foundation was an ingenuous Constitution with a Bill of Rights, the Rules of Evidence, and thousands of cases in dusty books. I was very wrong and na"ive. I have learned that, in our system, the only real assurance of fairness is the judge himself. The rules are merely the boundaries of the playing field.

So what if, as a judge, a person writes a thousand opinions, three of which his or her great-grandchildren will read in law school in the year 2046. So what if that judge is reversed only a dozen times. None of that really matters. The only thing that matters is that fairness prevailed in everything he or she did in the pursuit of justice. And more than most others, Judge Norman Ramsey was fair.

Why do we not honor our great judges more often, the way we honor our great athletes? Those of us who spend our lives in courts throughout this land have, in our hearts, a Hall of Fame for a few great judges. Norman Ramsey is one of them. His life, his service, his lawyering, and his judgeship make me proud to be a lawyer, and make everyone who shared his life proud to have been his friend.